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For Immediate Release

University Opens Its Doors to Young Students

University Park, Illinois, March 28, 2007 - Educational opportunities outside the classroom are often the most important and memorable school experiences.

Two classes of eighth grade students from St. Cletus School in LaGrange had that opportunity when they recently visited the Governors State University anatomy lab and physical therapy equipment room.

"It is extremely important for them to have these hands-on experiences," said Mary Ellen Dote, St. Cletus science teacher. "We are studying the human body and its systems in science so here they can see, for real, what we are studying in books."

The first half of the students' day at Governors State University was spent in the anatomy lab where Dr. Robert Druzinsky, Associate Professor of Anatomy and Neuroscience, explained why learning anatomy is so important to understanding how all the body's systems work together. The eighth graders watched university students as they explored the muscles, tendons, ligaments, and bones using a cadaver.

"Some of our students were not too sure they wanted to see this, but once they were in the lab, they seemed to understand how invaluable the lesson was," said Dote.

"It was really interesting to see everything in the anatomy lab. I am interested in science and this was a great chance to see the real thing," said student Brian Kelley of LaGrange.

After the visit to the anatomy lab, the students spent time learning about physical disabilities and the equipment that often helps a person without use of the legs gain mobility. The eighth graders took turns using several different types of wheel chairs from the conventional to the very light-weight sport chairs used in racing. They were even able to take the hand pedaled bike out for a spin around the halls of the university.

"It helps to understand the parts of the body and how they work together to make movement, I liked riding the sports bike the best," said student Amanda O'Shea of LaGrange.

"We hope that the experience helps break down some preconceived ideas the students have about the study of science. These eighth graders see the anatomy lab and learn an appreciation of what folks with disabilities have to deal with. It is more than just a day out of school," said Dr. Robbie O'Shea, Associate Professor of Physical Therapy at GSU.

"This is the third year we have come to Governors State University," said Dote. "The students thoroughly enjoy the day and if they come away with a greater understanding of the human body, then our goal is achieved."

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